

NATIONAL GUIDELINE CLEARINGHOUSE™ (NGC)  
GUIDELINE SYNTHESIS

SCREENING FOR AND MANAGEMENT OF CHLAMYDIAL INFECTION

Guidelines

1. American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM). [American College of Preventive Medicine practice policy statement. Screening for Chlamydia trachomatis](#). Am J Prev Med 2003 Apr; 24(3): 287-92. [82 references]
2. British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH). [2002 national guideline for the management of Chlamydia trachomatis genital tract infection](#). London: Association for Genitourinary Medicine (AGUM), Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Disease (MSSVD); 2002. Various p. [42 references]
3. \*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Diseases characterized by urethritis and cervicitis. Sexually transmitted diseases treatment guidelines 2002.  
CURRENT NGC SUMMARY: [Diseases characterized by urethritis and cervicitis. Sexually transmitted diseases treatment guidelines 2006](#).
4. Finnish Medical Society Duodecim (FMS). [Chlamydial urethritis and cervicitis](#). Helsinki, Finland: Duodecim Medical Publications Ltd.; 2005 Mar 30. Various p.

\*Note: This guideline and the corresponding NGC summary have been updated. NGC is working to update this synthesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[TABLE 1: SCOPE](#)

[Objective](#)

[Target Population](#)

[Intended Users](#)

[Interventions and Practices Considered](#)

[TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHLAMYDIAL INFECTION](#)

[SCREENING -- POPULATION GROUPS TO BE SCREENED](#)

- [Screening of Asymptomatic High-risk Groups](#)
- [Screening of Asymptomatic Pregnant Women](#)
- [Screening of Patients with Signs/Symptoms of Chlamydial Infection](#)

[SCREENING TESTS](#)

- [Types of Screening Tests](#)

- [Specimen of Choice](#)

## [MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS](#)

- [Antibiotic Regimens in Nonpregnant Women and Men](#)
- [Antibiotic Regimens During Pregnancy and Breast Feeding](#)
- [Patient Education and Preventive Counseling](#)
- [Partner Notification and Treatment](#)
- [Follow-up](#)

## [REFERENCES](#)

## [EVIDENCE RATING SCHEMES](#)

## [TABLE 3: BENEFITS AND HARMS](#)

[Potential Benefits](#)

[Potential Harms](#)

## [GUIDELINE CONTENT COMPARISON](#)

[Areas of Agreement](#)

[Areas of Differences](#)

## INTRODUCTION

A direct comparison of the American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM), the British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH; formerly the Association for Genitourinary Medicine/Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases [AGUM/MSSVD]), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim (FMS) recommendations for chlamydial infection is provided in the tables, below. The comparison focuses on screening for and management of chlamydial infection in adults. CDC also discusses diagnosis and management of chlamydial infections in infants and children as well as other sexually transmitted diseases characterized by urethritis and cervicitis, such as those caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. These latter topics, however, are not addressed in this synthesis. [Table 1](#) compares guideline scope.

[Table 2](#) compares recommendations for screening and management. The evidence supporting the major recommendations is also identified, with the definitions of the rating schemes used by BASHH and FMS included in the last row of [Table 2](#). Literature references for certain recommendations provided by BASHH and FMS are also listed in this table.

[Table 3](#) compares the potential benefits and harms of implementing the guidelines recommendations.

Following the content comparison table and discussion, the areas of agreement and differences among the guidelines are identified.

Abbreviations used in the text and tables follow:

- ACPM, American College of Preventive Medicine

- BASHH, British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (formerly the Association for Genitourinary Medicine/Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases)
- CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- C. trachomatis, Chlamydia trachomatis
- DFA, Direct fluorescent antibody
- EIA, Enzyme immunoassay
- ELISA, Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
- FMS, Finnish Medical Society Duodecim
- GUM, Genitourinary medicine
- HIV, Human immunodeficiency virus
- LCR, Ligase chain reaction
- MPC, Mucopurulent cervicitis
- NAAT, Nucleic acid amplification techniques
- PCR, Polymerase chain reaction
- PHE, Periodic health examination
- STDs, Sexually transmitted diseases

TABLE 1: SCOPE	
Objective	
ACPM (2003)	To present a practice policy statement on screening for Chlamydia trachomatis
BASHH (2002)	To present a national guideline for the management of Chlamydia trachomatis genital tract infection
CDC (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist physicians and other health-care providers in preventing and treating sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)</li> <li>• To present updated recommendations for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of STDs characterized by urethritis and cervicitis, including nongonococcal urethritis, mucopurulent cervicitis, chlamydial infection, gonorrhea, and gonococcal infections</li> </ul>
FMS (2005)	Evidence-Based Medicine Guidelines collects, summarizes, and updates the core clinical knowledge essential in general practice. The guidelines also describe the scientific evidence underlying the given recommendations.
Target Population	
ACPM (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States</li> <li>• Women and men who are sexually active, particularly females between the ages of 15 and 24 and all pregnant women</li> </ul>

BASHH (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Kingdom</li> <li>• Men and women with Chlamydia trachomatis genital tract infection</li> </ul>
CDC (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States</li> <li>• Sexually active women aged 25 years or younger and older women with risk factors for chlamydial infection (screening)</li> <li>• Men with urethritis definitely or possibly related to Chlamydia trachomatis infection</li> <li>• Women with mucopurulent cervicitis definitely or possibly related to Chlamydia trachomatis infection</li> <li>• Adolescents and adults with suspected chlamydial infection</li> <li>• Sex partners of individuals with diagnosed chlamydial infections</li> </ul> <p>Note: The guideline also targets individuals with other forms of nongonococcal urethritis and cervicitis; infants and children with chlamydial infection; adolescents and adults with gonococcal infection; individuals with quinolone-resistant Neisseria gonorrhoeae infection; and newborns, infants, and children with gonococcal infection.</p>
FMS (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finland</li> <li>• Men and women with (or with symptoms suggestive of) chlamydial urethritis or cervicitis (Diagnosis; Treatment; Management; Secondary Prevention)</li> <li>• Family planning clinic customers and, in general, women who see their physician to renew their contraceptive pill prescription (Screening)</li> <li>• Partners of patients diagnosed with chlamydial infections (Screening)</li> </ul>
Intended Users	
ACPM (2003)	Advanced Practice Nurses, Allied Health Personnel, Nurses, Physician Assistants, Physicians, Public Health Departments
BASHH (2002)	Physicians
CDC (2002)	Advanced Practice Nurses; Allied Health Personnel; Health Care Providers; Managed Care Organizations; Nurses; Physician Assistants; Physicians; Public Health Departments
FMS (2005)	Health Care Providers; Physicians
Interventions and Practices Considered	

ACPM (2003)	<p>Screening</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual screening of high-risk women</li> <li>2. Prenatal screening of all pregnant women</li> <li>3. Testing of sexual partners of women who test positive for Chlamydia</li> </ol> <p>Diagnostic Tests for Chlamydial Infection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Culture</li> <li>2. Immunoassay, such as enzyme immunoassay (EIA) with positive confirmation, rapid office-based immunoassay, or direct immunofluorescent antibody (DFA)</li> <li>3. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) probe</li> <li>4. DNA amplification, such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR), ligase chain reaction (LCR), or amplified DNA probe (strand displacement amplification)</li> <li>5. Ribonucleic acid (RNA) amplification, such as transcription-mediated amplification (TMA)</li> <li>6. Dipstick, such as leukocyte esterase with "trace cutoff"</li> </ol>
BASHH (2002)	<p>Diagnostic Tests for Chlamydial Infection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cell culture</li> <li>2. DFA</li> <li>3. EIA</li> <li>4. Nucleic acid amplification techniques (NAAT)</li> </ol> <p>Treatment/Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Antibiotics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doxycycline</li> <li>• Azithromycin</li> <li>• Erythromycin</li> <li>• Deteclo</li> <li>• Ofloxacin</li> <li>• Tetracycline</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Patient education</li> <li>3. Partner notification</li> <li>4. Follow-up and test of cure</li> </ol>
CDC (2002)	<p>Screening</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Screening of sexually active adolescents and young adults during routine annual examinations</li> <li>2. Annual screening of older women with risk factors</li> <li>3. Prenatal screening of pregnant women, especially those &lt; 25 years</li> </ol>

	<p>of age and those with multiple sex partners</p> <p>Diagnostic Tests for Chlamydial Infection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tissue culture for <i>C. trachomatis</i></li> <li>2. Nonculture tests (e.g., direct fluorescent antibody tests, enzyme immunoassays, and nucleic acid amplification tests) for <i>C. trachomatis</i></li> </ol> <p>Treatment/Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Antibiotics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Azithromycin</li> <li>• Doxycycline</li> <li>• Erythromycin base</li> <li>• Erythromycin ethylsuccinate</li> <li>• Ofloxacin</li> <li>• Levofloxacin</li> <li>• Amoxicillin</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Sex partner notification and referral for examination and treatment</li> <li>3. Follow-up to ensure that treatment has been effective and to detect possible reinfection, with patient instruction to abstain from sexual intercourse until treatment is completed</li> </ol>
FMS (2005)	<p>Screening</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Targeted and/or systematic screening for chlamydial infection</li> <li>2. Tracing contacts and partner screening</li> </ol> <p>Diagnostic Tests for Chlamydia Infection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment of clinical symptoms and signs</li> <li>2. Laboratory diagnostics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gene amplification methods, such as PCR and LCR</li> <li>• First-void urine samples</li> <li>• As an alternative for women to first-void urine, analyses of samples from the urethra, cervix, or cornea of the eye by gene amplification methods</li> <li>• Chlamydial serology for chronic infections and immunoglobulin G [IgG] antibody titres</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Treatment/Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Antibiotics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Azithromycin as the treatment of choice for chlamydial infection</li> <li>• Other alternatives: tetracycline or doxycycline</li> <li>• Combination of antibiotics in pelvic infections</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Testing of the permanent sexual partner of the index patient before</li> </ol>

	<p>treating partner</p> <p>3. Post-treatment follow-up</p> <p>4. Tracing the contacts of the patient</p>
--	--

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHLAMYDIAL INFECTION	
SCREENING -- POPULATION GROUPS TO BE SCREENED	
Screening of Asymptomatic High-risk Groups	
ACPM (2003)	<p>Sexually active women with risk factors should be screened annually. Risk factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age <math>\leq 25</math> years</li> <li>• A new male sex partner or two or more partners during the preceding year</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of barrier contraception</li> <li>• History of a prior STD</li> <li>• African-American race</li> <li>• Cervical ectopy</li> </ul>
BASHH (2002)	No recommendations offered
CDC (2002)	<p>In the United States, chlamydial genital infection occurs frequently among sexually active adolescents and young adults. Asymptomatic infection is common among both men and women. Sexually active adolescent women should be screened for chlamydial infection at least annually, even if symptoms are not present. Annual screening of all sexually active women aged 20--25 years is also recommended, as is screening of older women with risk factors (e.g., those who have a new sex partner and those with multiple sex partners). An appropriate sexual risk assessment should always be conducted and may indicate more frequent screening for some women.</p>
FMS (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has been shown that targeted screening for chlamydial infections is effective in preventing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and ectopic pregnancies (Scholes et al., 1996; Egger et al., 1998; Pimenta et al., 2000).</li> <li>• Screening for chlamydial infection is cost-effective if the prevalence of chlamydia infection exceeds 3% in the population (Paavonen, et al., 1998). Systematic screening for chlamydial infection has been considered relevant among family planning clinic customers and in</li> </ul>

	<p>general those young women who see their physician to renew their contraceptive pill prescription, especially if there is a history of temporary sexual partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracing the contacts of the patient is the most effective way of combating the disease. Partner screening normally yields 20-30% positive cases. The practice of taking first-void urine samples from the partner at home has increased the number of detected infections by 50% compared with the usual practice of partner notification (Östergaard et al., 1998). Many young people are unaware that chlamydial infection is often asymptomatic, which reduces and delays testing for chlamydia.</li> </ul>
Screening of Asymptomatic Pregnant Women	
ACPM (2003)	Pregnant women should be screened during their first trimester or at their first prenatal visit. Those with risk factors should be re-screened during their third trimester.
BASHH (2002)	No recommendations offered
CDC (2002)	Prenatal screening of pregnant women can prevent chlamydial infection among neonates. Pregnant women aged <25 years are at high risk for infection. Local or regional prevalence surveys of chlamydial infection can be conducted to confirm the validity of using these recommendations in particular settings.
FMS (2005)	No recommendations offered
Screening of Patients with Signs/Symptoms of Chlamydial Infection	
ACPM (2003)	Women with mucopurulent discharge, suggestive of cervicitis, should be tested immediately.
BASHH (2002)	No recommendations offered
CDC (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All male patients who have urethritis should be evaluated for the presence of gonococcal and chlamydial infection. Testing for chlamydia is strongly recommended because of the increased utility and availability of highly sensitive and specific testing methods, and because a specific diagnosis may enhance partner notification and improve compliance with treatment, especially in the exposed partner.</li> <li>Female patients who have mucopurulent cervicitis (MPC) should be tested for <i>C. trachomatis</i> and for <i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i> with the most sensitive and specific test available. However, MPC is not a sensitive predictor of infection with these organisms; most women</li> </ul>



	who have <i>C. trachomatis</i> or <i>N. gonorrhoeae</i> do not have MPC.
FMS (2005)	Chlamydial infection can be suspected but never diagnosed on the basis of symptoms alone. A burning sensation and mucous discharge from the urethra are common symptoms in men after unprotected sexual intercourse with a temporary partner. Although Gram or methylene blue stains of plain smear specimens are usually rich in white blood cells, chlamydia is found to be the cause of the infection in only half the patients. A reliable diagnosis of chlamydial infection in both men and women can therefore be reached only by appropriate microbiological sampling.
SCREENING TESTS	
Types of Screening Tests	
ACPM (2003)	Any well-validated, laboratory-based amplification or antigen method may be used. (The guideline notes, however, that the decision as to which screening test to utilize must be based both on the estimated prevalence in the screened population and available funding. When economically feasible, the use of amplification tests is preferable.)
BASHH (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideal diagnostic test sensitivity is &gt;90% with specificity &gt;99%. The tests which most closely approach this are the NAATs. These perform better or at least as well as any of the other tests.</li> <li>• Only the better performing EIAs should be used, with sensitivities &gt;80% and where sensitivity comparisons against NAAT techniques have been carried out.</li> <li>• With EIAs, the technique of confirmation in the negative grey zone, either by DFA or NAAT, should be introduced (Dean, Ferrero, &amp; McCarthy, 1998; Tong, Donnelly, &amp; Hood, 1997). This improves sensitivity by 5 to 30%.</li> <li>• Quality control to validate the sensitivity and specificity of the assay used by individual laboratories should be undertaken, in view of the reported wide range in the sensitivity of all tests. Both interlaboratory and intralaboratory control samples should be carried out, using both strong positives and negative and weakly reactive specimens.</li> </ul>
CDC (2002)	Nucleic acid amplification tests enable detection of <i>N. gonorrhoeae</i> and <i>C. trachomatis</i> on all specimens. These tests are more sensitive than traditional culture techniques for <i>C. trachomatis</i> and are the preferred method for the detection of this organism.
FMS (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gene amplification methods have replaced previous techniques, and first-void urine samples have acquired an established position in chlamydial diagnostics in both men and women.</li> <li>• Gene amplification methods, such as PCR and LCR, are based on</li> </ul>

	<p>multiplication of chlamydial nucleic acids with specific probes. The main assets of the methods are their high sensitivity and the fact that they, unlike culture methods, yield a positive result also when there are no living chlamydia in the sample. Compared with traditional culture methods, gene amplification methods reveal 5 to 7% more cases of chlamydial infection, and false positives are practically nonexistent. (Pasternack, Vuorinen, &amp; Miettinen, 1997; Puolakkainen et al., 1998). The price of these tests has come down to an acceptable level. Today chlamydia and gonorrhoea can be analysed on the same sample if required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chlamydial serology may be useful in chronic infections. High IgG antibody titres are often present in pelvic infections and also in other complications. An isolated positive test indicates that the patient has a history of chlamydial infection.</li> </ul>
Specimen of Choice	
ACPM (2003)	<p>The guideline notes that tests vary in the type of specimens on which they may be used, the level of skill required to collect and transport specimens, the level of skill required by the testing laboratory, and the accuracy and rapidity of results.</p> <p>Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specimens may be obtained from (1) the endocervix, using a swab; (2) urethra and vagina using a swab; and (3) first-catch urine.</li> <li>Cervical or urine specimens are recommended.</li> </ul> <p>Men</p> <p>Specimens can be obtained by swabbing the anterior urethra as well as through first-catch urine.</p>
BASHH (2002)	<p>Women</p> <p>Antigen detection techniques -- EIA and DFA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cervical swab is the best specimen.</li> <li>10 to 20% additional positives will be detected by assaying a urethral specimen as well (Hay et al., 1994; Paavonen, 1979). This can be combined with the cervical specimen for analysis. Urethral swabbing suffers from the same disadvantages as in men (see below).</li> <li>Urine specimens perform significantly less well with EIA than cervical specimens and are not recommended.</li> <li>EIA should not be used for detecting <i>C. trachomatis</i> in the rectum or pharynx.</li> </ul>

	<p>NAAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cervical swabs consistently have sensitivities &gt;80% (Black, 1997; Ridgway et al., 1996).</li> <li>• Urine has reported sensitivities of 44 to 94% (Jensen, Thorsen, &amp; Moller, 1997; Andrews et al., 1997; Black, 1997; Ridgway et al., 1996; Horner et al., 1998; Lee et al., 1995; Rabenau et al., 1997).</li> <li>• Vulvo-vaginal swabs have a sensitivity <math>\geq</math>85%.</li> </ul> <p>Menstrual cycle and testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary data suggest that testing for C. trachomatis may detect more cases when undertaken in the latter part of the menstrual cycle. (Horner et al., 1998; Taylor-Robinson et al., 1998; Crowley et al., 1997). This is further supported by the findings from a community based study conducted in Denmark (Moller et al., 1999).</li> </ul> <p>Men</p> <p>Antigen detection techniques -- EIA and DFA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First voided urine sample is as good as, if not better than, a urethral swab (Caul et al., 1989; Hay et al., 1991). The former is preferred because some patients find urethral swabbing painful and tolerate it poorly and thus there is the potential for obtaining an inadequate quality specimen. Patients should hold their urine at least 1 hour before being tested and preferably longer, as otherwise sensitivity is reduced (the optimum duration is not known).</li> <li>• EIA should not be used for detecting C. trachomatis in the rectum or pharynx.</li> </ul> <p>NAAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First voided urine sample is the preferred specimen (Chernesky et al., 1994) (see above).</li> </ul>
CDC (2002)	No specific recommendations are made for adult patients.
FMS (2005)	<p>Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As an alternative to first-void urine, women may give urethral and cervical swab samples which are then analysed by the same gene amplification methods. Even samples from the cornea of the eye can be examined by gene amplification techniques.</li> </ul>

	<p>Men and Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-void urine samples are used for chlamydial diagnostics in both men and women. Samples are taken when at least five to seven days have passed since the potential time of acquirement of infection. The patient has to refrain from voiding for 2 hours before urine sampling. The sample (10 mL) is sent to a laboratory in the normal way. If needed, the sample may be kept refrigerated for one or two days.</li> <li>• First-void urine samples are well suited for home screening of risk groups or sexual partners (Östergaard et al., 1998).</li> </ul>
MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	
Antibiotic Regimens in Nonpregnant Women and Men	
ACPM (2003)	No recommendations offered
BASHH (2002)	<p>Ideally, treatment should be effective (microbiological cure rate &gt;95%), easy to take (not more than twice daily), with a low side effect profile, and cause minimal interference with daily lifestyle (C recommendation).</p> <p>Treatment of uncomplicated infection  <u>Recommended regimens (A recommendation):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doxycycline 100 mg twice a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Azithromycin 1 g orally in a single dose</li> </ul> <p><u>Alternative regimens (A recommendation):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erythromycin 500 mg four times a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erythromycin 500 mg twice a day for 14 days</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deteclo 300 mg twice a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>or</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofloxacin 200 mg twice a day or 400 mg once a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tetracycline 500 mg four times a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p><u>Doxycycline and azithromycin (level of evidence Ia)</u>  These have been shown to have equal efficacy in clinical studies (Weber &amp; Johnson, 1995; Moore, McQuay &amp; Muir Gray, 1996; Hillis et al., 1998). Azithromycin is considerably more expensive than doxycycline. Azithromycin may be particularly useful in patients with erratic healthcare seeking behaviour (Handsfield &amp; Stamm, 1998).</p> <p><u>Ofloxacin (level of evidence Ib)</u>  It is unknown whether 200 mg twice a day is superior to 400 mg once a day. There is no evidence to suggest that compliance with a once a day regimen is better than twice daily regimens (Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin, 1991).</p> <p>Whether missing a dose with 400 mg daily results in a less efficacious regimen than missing a dose with 200 mg twice daily is unknown. Ofloxacin has similar efficacy to doxycycline and a better side effect profile but is considerably more expensive, so is not recommended as first-line treatment.</p> <p><u>Erythromycin (level of evidence Ib)</u>  Erythromycin is less efficacious than either azithromycin or doxycycline. When taken four times a day, 20 to 25% may experience side effects sufficient to cause the patient to discontinue treatment (Linneman, Heaton &amp; Ritchey, 1987). There are only limited data on erythromycin 500 mg twice a day, with efficacy reported at between 73 to 95% (Linneman, Heaton &amp; Ritchey, 1987; Stenberg &amp; Mardh, 1993; Ross, Crean &amp; McMillan, 1996). A two week course appears to be more efficacious than a one week course of 500 mg twice a day, with a cure rate <math>\geq 95\%</math> in a small study (Linneman, Heaton &amp; Ritchey, 1987; Stenberg &amp; Mardh, 1993).</p> <p><u>Other tetracyclines (level of evidence Ib)</u>  Deteclo is probably as efficacious as doxycycline (Munday et al., 1995). However, photosensitivity occurs more frequently and there are not as many data on efficacy if compliance is poor. Tetracycline 500 mg is effective when taken four times a day for seven days. Compliance with such a regimen is likely to be poor, particularly in less motivated patients, and whether such a regimen would then be efficacious is unknown. Oxytetracycline 250 mg four times a day has also been shown to be effective, although the published evidence is limited (Ross, Crean &amp; McMillan, 1996).</p>
CDC (2002)	Recommended Regimens

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Azithromycin 1 g orally in a single dose</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doxycycline 100 mg orally twice a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>Alternative Regimens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erythromycin base 500 mg orally four times a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erythromycin ethylsuccinate 800 mg orally four times a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofloxacin 300 mg orally twice a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levofloxacin 500 mg orally for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>The results of clinical trials indicate that azithromycin and doxycycline are equally efficacious. These investigations were conducted primarily in populations in which follow-up was encouraged and adherence to a 7-day regimen was good. Azithromycin should always be available to health-care providers to treat patients for whom compliance is in question.</p> <p>To maximize compliance with recommended therapies, medications for chlamydial infections should be dispensed on site, and the first dose should be directly observed. To minimize further transmission of infection, patients treated for chlamydia should be instructed to abstain from sexual intercourse for 7 days after single-dose therapy or until completion of a 7-day regimen. To minimize the risk for reinfection, patients also should be instructed to abstain from sexual intercourse until all of their sex partners are treated.</p>
FMS (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Azithromycin 1 g as a single dose is the treatment of choice for chlamydial infection, including infection in pregnant patients (Brocklehurst &amp; Rooney, 1998). Other alternatives are tetracycline 500 mg x3/day or doxycycline 100 mg x2/day for 7 to 10 days. Some 10% of patients get mild gastric side effects from azithromycin and tetracyclines. Azithromycin therapy has the benefit of 100% compliance; it is more expensive than the common tetracyclines, however. Controlled studies have shown similar therapeutic outcomes for these drugs, with 95 to 97% of patients being cured.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chlamydial infections of the throat, anus or eyes are treated with azithromycin for three to five days. For mild complications, patients are given tetracycline or doxycycline for two to three weeks, for reactive arthritis triggered by chlamydial infection even longer. In pelvic infections, combinations of antibiotics are used, as other bacteria, such as anaerobes, may be involved.</li> <li>The permanent sexual partner of the index patient should be tested before any treatment since the partner is not necessarily infected. The suitability of the antibiotic for the partner should also be ascertained, as well as ensuring that the female partner to be treated is not pregnant. Furthermore, the partner may have transmitted the infection to other persons, an issue that can only be clarified by having the partner visit the physician or clinic.</li> </ul>
Antibiotic Regimens During Pregnancy and Breast Feeding	
ACPM (2003)	No recommendations offered
BASHH (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doxycycline and ofloxacin are contraindicated in pregnancy</li> <li>The safety of azithromycin in pregnancy and lactating mothers has not yet been fully assessed, although available data indicate that it is effective</li> <li>Erythromycin has a significant side effect profile and is less than 95% effective. There are no trials of erythromycin 500 mg twice a day for 14 days, which would be better tolerated than four times a day</li> <li>Amoxycillin had a similar cure rate to erythromycin in a meta-analysis and had a much better side effect profile (Brocklehurst &amp; Rooney, 1998). However, amoxycillin in vitro has been shown to induce latency: there is therefore debate as to whether it is reliable</li> </ul> <p>Regimens (Ia, A recommendation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erythromycin 500 mg four times a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erythromycin 500 mg twice a day for 14 days</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amoxycillin 500 mg three times a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>Patients should have a test of cure 3 weeks after completing therapy.</p>
CDC (2002)	Doxycycline and ofloxacin are contraindicated in pregnant women. However, clinical experience and preliminary data suggest that azithromycin is safe and effective. Repeat testing (preferably by

	<p>culture) 3 weeks after completion of therapy with the following regimens is recommended for all pregnant women, because these regimens may not be highly efficacious and the frequent side effects of erythromycin might discourage patient compliance with this regimen.</p> <p>Recommended Regimens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erythromycin base 500 mg orally four times a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amoxicillin 500 mg orally three times daily for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>Alternative Regimens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erythromycin base 250 mg orally four times a day for 14 days</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erythromycin ethylsuccinate 800 mg orally four times a day for 7 days</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erythromycin ethylsuccinate 400 mg orally four times a day for 14 days</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Azithromycin 1 g orally, single dose</li> </ul> <p>Note: Erythromycin estolate is contraindicated during pregnancy because of drug-related hepatotoxicity.</p>
FMS (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Azithromycin 1 g as a single dose is the treatment of choice for chlamydial infection, including infection in pregnant patients (Brocklehurst &amp; Rooney, 1998) [B]. Other alternatives are tetracycline 500 mg x 3/day or doxycycline 100 mg x 2/day for 7 to 10 days. Some 10% of patients get mild gastric side effects from azithromycin and tetracyclines. Azithromycin therapy has the benefit of 100% compliance; it is more expensive than the common tetracyclines, however. Controlled studies have shown similar therapeutic outcomes for these drugs, with 95 to 97% of patients being cured.</li> <li>Amoxicillin and erythromycin are equally effective for antenatal chlamydial cervicitis (Turrentine &amp; Newton, 1995; DARE-960039, 1999) [B].</li> </ul>



Patient Education and Preventive Counseling	
ACPM (2003)	No recommendations offered
BASHH (2002)	<p>In general, compliance with therapy is improved if there is a positive therapeutic relationship between the patient and the doctor. (Sanson-Fisher, Bowman &amp; Armstrong, 1992) This can probably be improved if the following are applied (C recommendation):</p> <p>Discuss with patient and provide clear written information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What chlamydia is and how it is transmitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is a sexually transmitted infection.</li> <li>• if asymptomatic there is evidence that it could persist for months or even years.</li> <li>• it can be isolated from the throat and eye without detectable infection in the lower genital tract. (Stenberg &amp; Mardh, 1993; Postema, Remeijer &amp; van der Meijden, 1996)</li> <li>• It can therefore not always be assumed to be sexually acquired. (Midulla et al., 1987)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The diagnosis of chlamydia, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is often asymptomatic especially in women</li> <li>• while tests are accurate, no test is absolutely so</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The complications of untreated Chlamydia</li> <li>• Side effects and importance of complying fully with treatment and what to do if a dose is missed</li> <li>• Interaction between antibiotics and oral contraceptive pill</li> <li>• The importance of their sexual partner(s) being evaluated and treated</li> <li>• Advice to abstain from sexual intercourse until they have completed therapy and their partner has been treated</li> <li>• Advice on safer sexual practices</li> </ul>
CDC (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients should be instructed to refer their sex partners for evaluation and treatment</li> <li>• Patients should be instructed to avoid sexual intercourse until therapy is completed and until they and their sex partners no longer have symptoms</li> </ul>
FMS (2005)	No recommendations offered.
Partner Notification and Treatment	
ACPM (2003)	All partners of women with positive tests should be tested for Chlamydia trachomatis.

BASHH (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All patients identified with <i>C. trachomatis</i> infection should be referred to discuss partner notification, where possible at initial diagnosis.</li> <li>• The method of partner notification agreed for each partner/contact identified should be documented.</li> <li>• At subsequent follow up, partner notification outcomes should be ascertained and documented.</li> </ul> <p><u>Look Back Period</u></p> <p>Only limited evaluation has taken place of the incubation period following exposure to the development of symptoms. In the United Kingdom (FitzGerald et al., 1998) an arbitrary cut off of 4 weeks is used to identify those sexual partner(s) potentially at risk if the index male patient is symptomatic. As it is not known how long a patient can carry chlamydia asymptomatically, an arbitrary cut off of 6 months or until the last previous sexual partner (whichever is the longer time period), is used in women and asymptomatic men. Common sense needs to be used in assessing which sexual partner(s) may have been at risk in these situations. Those at risk should be informed and invited to attend for evaluation and epidemiological treatment even if tests are negative. This may be patient led or provider led if the patient is unwilling to undertake it.</p>
CDC (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients should be instructed to refer their sex partners for evaluation, testing, and treatment. The following recommendations on exposure intervals are based on limited evaluation. Sex partners should be evaluated, tested, and treated if they had sexual contact with the patient during the 60 days preceding onset of symptoms in the patient or diagnosis of chlamydia. The most recent sex partner should be evaluated and treated even if the time of the last sexual contact was &gt;60 days before symptom onset or diagnosis.</li> <li>• Patients should be instructed to abstain from sexual intercourse until they and their sex partners have completed treatment. Abstinence should be continued until 7 days after a single-dose regimen or after completion of a 7-day regimen. Timely treatment of sex partners is essential for decreasing the risk for reinfecting the index patient.</li> </ul>
FMS (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every physician treating patients with chlamydial infections is required to trace the sexual contacts of their patients (Mathews et al., 2002) [B]. The physician should enquire the index patient whether the person who is the source of the infection and any persons potentially infected have been tested for chlamydia and received treatment as needed. If desired, the attending physician may delegate the screening of sexual partners to a physician responsible for communicable diseases.</li> <li>• Patient assistance at facilitating patient referral and provider referral may increase partner notification for sexually transmitted diseases (Oxman et al., 1994; DARE-945071, 1999) [C].</li> <li>• Provider referral and contract referral are more effective than</li> </ul>

	<p>patient referral among patients in increasing the rate of partners presenting for medical evaluation (Mathews et al., 2002) [B].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracing the contacts of the patient is the most effective way of combating the disease. Partner screening normally yields 20 to 30% positive cases. The practice of taking first-void urine samples from the partner at home has increased the number of detected infections by 50% compared with the usual practice of partner notification (Östergaard et al., 1998). Many young people are unaware that chlamydial infection is often asymptomatic, which reduces and delays testing for chlamydia.</li> </ul>
Follow-up	
ACPM (2003)	No recommendations offered.
BASHH (2002)	<p>This is an important part of the management of chlamydial infection. However, some patients may not return, emphasizing the importance of the initial consultation. Follow up has a number of objectives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following up partner notification</li> <li>Reinforcing health education</li> <li>Providing reassurance</li> <li>Assessment of treatment efficacy/exclusion of re-infection</li> </ul> <p>Patients do not need to be retested for <i>C. trachomatis</i> after completing treatment with doxycycline or azithromycin unless symptoms persist or re-infection is suspected, as both are highly efficacious (C recommendation). A test of cure should be considered 3 weeks after the end of treatment with erythromycin. A test of cure earlier will miss late failures and may detect non-viable organisms.</p>
CDC (2002)	<p>Patients do not need to be retested for chlamydia after completing treatment with doxycycline or azithromycin unless symptoms persist or reinfection is suspected. A test of cure may be considered 3 weeks after completion of treatment with erythromycin. The validity of chlamydial culture testing at &lt;3 weeks after completion of therapy to identify patients who did not respond to therapy has not been established. False-negative results can occur resulting from infections involving small numbers of chlamydial organisms. In addition, nonculture tests conducted at &lt;3 weeks after completion of therapy for patients who were treated successfully could yield false-positive results because of continued excretion of dead organisms.</p> <p>A high prevalence of <i>C. trachomatis</i> infection is found in women who have had chlamydial infection in the preceding several months. Most post-treatment infections result from reinfection, often occurring because patient's sex partners were not treated or because the patient</p>

	<p>resumed sex among a network of persons with a high prevalence of infection. Repeat infection confers an elevated risk of PID and other complications when compared with initial infection. Therefore, recently infected women are a high priority for repeat testing for <i>C. trachomatis</i>. For these reasons, clinicians and health-care agencies should consider advising all women with chlamydial infection to be rescreened 3 to 4 months after treatment. Some specialists believe rescreening is an especially high priority for adolescents. Providers are also strongly encouraged to rescreen all women treated for chlamydial infection whenever they next present for care within the following 12 months, regardless of whether the patient believes that her sex partners were treated.</p> <p>Rescreening is distinct from early retesting to detect therapeutic failure (test-of-cure). Except in pregnant women, test-of-cure is not recommended for persons treated with the recommended regimens, unless therapeutic compliance is in question.</p>
FMS (2005)	A follow-up visit should only take place after three to four weeks because the presence of gene traces may produce a false positive result in an earlier re-test.
REFERENCES	
BASHH (2002)	<p>Andrews WW, Lee HH, Roden WJ, Mott CW. Detection of genitourinary tract <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> infection in pregnant women by ligase chain reaction assay. <i>Obstet Gynecol</i> 1997 Apr; 89(4):556-60.</p> <p>Black CM. Current methods of laboratory diagnosis of <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> infections. <i>Clin Microbiol Rev</i> 1997 Jan; 10(1):160-84. [245 references]</p> <p>Brocklehurst P, Rooney G. The treatment of genital <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> infection in pregnancy. In: Neilson JP, Crowther CA, Hodnett ED, Hofmeyr GJ, editor(s). <i>Pregnancy and childbirth module of the Cochrane database of systematic reviews</i> [updated 2 Dec 1997]. The Cochrane Collaboration; Issue 1. Oxford: Update Software; 1998. p. 1-6.</p> <p>Caul EO, Paul ID, Milne JD, Crowley T. Non-invasive sampling method for detecting <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i>. <i>Lancet</i> 1988 Nov 26; 2(8622):1246-7.</p> <p>Chernesky MA, Jang D, Lee H, Burczak JD, Hu H, Sellors J, Tomazic-Allen SJ, Mahony JB. Diagnosis of <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> infections in men and women by testing first-void urine by ligase chain reaction. <i>J Clin Microbiol</i> 1994 Nov; 32(11):2682-5.</p> <p>Crowley T, Horner P, Hughes A, Berry J, Paul I, Caul O. Hormonal factors and the laboratory detection of <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> in</p>

women: implications for screening. *Int J STD AIDS* 1997 Jan;8(1):25-31.

Dean D, Ferrero D, McCarthy M. Comparison of performance and cost-effectiveness of direct fluorescent-antibody, ligase chain reaction, and PCR assays for verification of chlamydial enzyme immunoassay results for populations with a low to moderate prevalence of *Chlamydia trachomatis*. *J Clin Microbiol* 1998 Jan;36(1):94-9.

FitzGerald MR, Welch J, Robinson AJ, Ahmed-Jushuf IH. Clinical guidelines and standards for the management of uncomplicated genital chlamydial infection. Central Audit Group in Genitourinary Medicine. *Int J STD AIDS* 1998 May;9(5):253-62.

Handsfield HH, Stamm WE. Treating chlamydial infection: compliance versus cost. *Sex Transm Dis* 1998 Jan;25(1):12-3.

Hay PE, Thomas BJ, Gilchrist C, Palmer HM, Gilroy CB, Taylor-Robinson D. The value of urine samples from men with non-gonococcal urethritis for the detection of *Chlamydia trachomatis*. *Genitourin Med* 1991 Apr;67(2):124-8.

Hay PE, Thomas BJ, Horner PJ, MacLeod E, Renton AM, Taylor-Robinson D. *Chlamydia trachomatis* in women: the more you look, the more you find. *Genitourin Med* 1994 Apr;70(2):97-100.

Helping patients to make the best use of medicines. *Drug Ther Bull* 1991 Jan 7;29(1):1-2. [10 references]

Hillis SD, Coles FB, Litchfield B, Black CM, Mojica B, Schmitt K, St Louis ME. Doxycycline and azithromycin for prevention of chlamydial persistence or recurrence one month after treatment in women. A use-effectiveness study in public health settings. *Sex Transm Dis* 1998 Jan;25(1):5-11.

Horner PJ, Crowley T, Leece J, Hughes A, Smith GD, Caul EO. *Chlamydia trachomatis* detection and the menstrual cycle. *Lancet* 1998 Jan 31;351(9099):341-2.

Jensen IP, Thorsen P, Moller BR. Sensitivity of ligase chain reaction assay of urine from pregnant women for *Chlamydia trachomatis*. *Lancet* 1997 Feb 1;349(9048):329-30.

Lee HH, Chernesky MA, Schachter J, Burczak JD, Andrews WW, Muldoon S, Leckie G, Stamm WE. Diagnosis of *Chlamydia trachomatis* genitourinary infection in women by ligase chain reaction assay of urine. *Lancet* 1995 Jan 28;345(8944):213-6.

Linnemann CC Jr, Heaton CL, Ritchey M. Treatment of *Chlamydia trachomatis* infections: comparison of 1- and 2-g doses of erythromycin

daily for seven days. Sex Transm Dis 1987 Apr-Jun; 14(2):102-6.

Midulla M, Sollecito D, Feleppa F, Assensio AM, Ilari S. Infection by airborne Chlamydia trachomatis in a dentist cured with rifampicin after failures with tetracycline and doxycycline. Br Med J (Clin Res Ed) 1987 Mar 21; 294(6574): 742.

Moller JK, Andersen B, Olesen F, Lignell T, Ostergaard L. Impact of menstrual cycle on the diagnostic performance of LCR, TMA, and PCE for detection of Chlamydia trachomatis in home obtained and mailed vaginal flush and urine samples. Sex Transm Infect 1999 Aug; 75(4): 228-30.

Moore A, McQuay H, Muir Gray. Chlamydial STD treatment. Bandolier 1996; 3: 4-6.

Munday PE, Thomas BJ, Gilroy CB, Gilchrist C, Taylor-Robinson D. Infrequent detection of Chlamydia trachomatis in a longitudinal study of women with treated cervical infection. Genitourin Med 1995 Feb; 71(1): 24-6.

Paavonen J. Chlamydia trachomatis-induced urethritis in female partners of men with nongonococcal urethritis. Sex Transm Dis 1979 Apr-Jun; 6(2): 69-71.

Postema EJ, Remeijer L, van der Meijden WI. Epidemiology of genital chlamydial infections in patients with chlamydial conjunctivitis; a retrospective study. Genitourin Med 1996 Jun; 72(3): 203-5.

Rabenau H, Berger A, Doerr HW, Weber B. Testing for Chlamydia trachomatis in urine. Lancet 1997 Apr 5; 349(9057): 1024-5.

Ridgway GL, Mumtaz G, Robinson AJ, Franchini M, Carder C, Burczak J, Lee H. Comparison of the ligase chain reaction with cell culture for the diagnosis of Chlamydia trachomatis infection in women. J Clin Pathol 1996 Feb; 49(2): 116-9.

Ross JD, Crean A, McMillan A. Efficacy of anti-chlamydial therapy with oxytetracycline and erythromycin. Int J STD AIDS 1996 Aug-Sep; 7(5): 373-4.

Sanson-Fisher R, Bowman J, Armstrong S. Factors affecting nonadherence with antibiotics. Diagn Microbiol Infect Dis 1992 May-Jun; 15(4 Suppl): 103S-109S. [49 references]

Stenberg K, Mardh PA. Treatment of concomitant eye and genital chlamydial infection with erythromycin and roxithromycin. Acta Ophthalmol (Copenh) 1993 Jun; 71(3): 332-5.

Taylor-Robinson D, Thomas B, Pierpoint T, Renton A. Ligase chain

	<p>reaction assay for Chlamydia trachomatis during the menstrual cycle. Lancet 1998 Apr 25; 351(9111):1290.</p> <p>Tong CY, Donnelly C, Hood N. Lowering the cut off value of an automated chlamydia enzyme immunoassay and confirmation by PCR and direct immunofluorescent antibody test. J Clin Pathol 1997 Aug; 50(8):681-5.</p> <p>Weber JT, Johnson RE. New treatments for Chlamydia trachomatis genital infection. Clin Infect Dis 1995 Apr; 20(Suppl 1):S66-71. [50 references]</p>
FMS (2005)	<p>Brockelhurst P, Rooney G. Interventions for treating genital Chlamydia trachomatis infection in pregnancy. The Cochrane Database of systematic reviews. CD000054. [database online]. Issue 2. Oxford: Update Software; 1998</p> <p>Egger M, Low N, Smith GD, Lindblom B, Herrmann B. Screening for chlamydial infections and the risk of ectopic pregnancy in a county in Sweden: ecological analysis. BMJ 1998 Jun 13; 316(7147):1776-80.</p> <p>Mathews C, Coetzee N, Zwarenstein M, Lombard C, Guttmacher S, Oxman A, Schmid G. Strategies for partner notification for sexually transmitted diseases. The Cochrane Database of systematic reviews. CD002843. [database online]. Issue 2. Oxford: Update Software; 2002</p> <p>Östergaard L, Andersen B, Olesen F, Moller JK. Efficacy of home sampling for screening of Chlamydia trachomatis: randomised study. BMJ 1998 Jul 4; 317(7150):26-7.</p> <p>Oxman AD, Scott EA, Sellors JW, Clarke JH, Millson ME, Rasooly I, Frank JW, Naus M, Goldblatt E. Partner notification for sexually transmitted diseases: an overview of the evidence. Can J Public Health 1994 Jul-Aug; 85 Suppl 1:S41-7. [50 references]</p> <p>Paavonen J, Puolakkainen M, Paukku M, Sintonen H. Cost-benefit analysis of first-void urine Chlamydia trachomatis screening program. Obstet Gynecol 1998 Aug; 92(2):292-8.</p> <p>Pasternack R, Vuorinen P, Miettinen A. Evaluation of the Gen-Probe Chlamydia trachomatis transcription-mediated amplification assay with urine specimens from women. J Clin Microbiol 1997 Mar; 35(3):676-8.</p> <p>Pimenta J, Catchpole M, Gray M, Hopwood J, Randall S. Evidence based health policy report. Screening for genital chlamydial infection. BMJ 2000 Sep 9; 321(7261):629-31.</p> <p>Puolakkainen M, Hiltunen-Back E, Reunala T, Suhonen S, Lahteenmaki P, Lehtinen M, Paavonen J. Comparison of performances of two commercially available tests, a PCR assay and a ligase chain reaction</p>

	<p>test, in detection of urogenital Chlamydia trachomatis infection. J Clin Microbiol 1998 Jun; 36(6): 1489-93.</p> <p>Scholes D, Stergachis A, Heidrich FE, Andrilla H, Holmes KK, Stamm WE. Prevention of pelvic inflammatory disease by screening for cervical chlamydial infection. N Engl J Med 1996 May 23; 334(21): 1362-6.</p> <p>The database of abstracts of reviews of effectiveness (University of York), DARE-945071. [database online]. Issue 4. Oxford: Update Software; 1999</p> <p>The Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effectiveness (University of York), DARE-960039. [database online]. Issue 4. Oxford: Update Software; 1999</p> <p>Turrentine MA, Newton ER. Amoxicillin or erythromycin for the treatment of antenatal chlamydial infection: a meta-analysis. Obstet Gynecol 1995 Dec; 86(6): 1021-5.</p>
EVIDENCE RATING SCHEMES	
ACPM (2003)	Evidence was not graded.
BASHH (2002)	<p>Levels of Evidence</p> <p>Ia — Evidence obtained from meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials</p> <p>Ib — Evidence obtained from at least one randomised controlled trial</p> <p>IIa — Evidence obtained from at least one well designed controlled study without randomisation</p> <p>IIb — Evidence obtained from at least one other type of well designed quasi-experimental study</p> <p>III — Evidence obtained from well-designed non-experimental descriptive studies such as comparative studies, correlation studies, and case control studies</p> <p>IV — Evidence obtained from expert committee reports or opinions and/or clinical experience of respected authorities</p> <p>Grading or Recommendations</p> <p>A. (Evidence levels Ia, Ib): Requires at least one randomised controlled trial as part of the body of literature of overall good quality and consistency addressing the specific recommendation.</p> <p>B. (Evidence levels IIa, IIb, III): Requires availability of well conducted clinical studies but no randomised clinical trials on the topic of recommendation.</p> <p>C. (Evidence level IV): Requires evidence from expert committee reports or opinions and/or clinical experience of respected authorities. Indicates</p>



	absence of directly applicable studies of good quality.
CDC (2002)	Evidence was not graded.
FMS (2005)	<p>Levels of Evidence</p> <p>A. Strong research-based evidence. Multiple relevant, high-quality scientific studies with homogenic results.</p> <p>B. Moderate research-based evidence. At least one relevant, high-quality study or multiple adequate studies.</p> <p>C. Limited research-based evidence. At least one adequate scientific study.</p> <p>D. No research-based evidence. Expert panel evaluation of other information.</p>

TABLE 3: BENEFITS AND HARMS	
Benefits	
ACPM (2003)	Chlamydia trachomatis urogenital infections are highly prevalent among adolescents and young adults. Sequelae of undetected, untreated infections account for substantial healthcare costs. Treatment is effective, simple, and well tolerated. The majority of infected women and many men are asymptomatic; thus, screening is necessary for detection. Recently screening for Chlamydia trachomatis was simplified through the development of noninvasive, highly sensitive, amplification screening tests. Chlamydia trachomatis screening programs can be effective, both in lowering disease prevalence and decreasing the incidence of sequelae.
BASHH (2002)	These guidelines will aid in the appropriate diagnosis, treatment and management of patients with Chlamydia trachomatis genital tract infection. This infection is common (3 to 5% of sexually active women attending United Kingdom general practice) and sustained by unrecognised and thus untreated symptomless infection in both men and women. Complications cost at least 50 million pounds annually in the United Kingdom. Approximately 40% of non-gonococcal urethritis is caused by C. trachomatis.
CDC (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate screening and management of chlamydial infection</li> <li>• Prevention of transmission of chlamydial infection to sex partners and infants of infected mothers</li> </ul>

FMS (2005)	Identification, diagnosis and effective treatment of the patient with chlamydial urethritis and cervicitis may help avoid the serious complications of prolonged or recurrent infection (e.g., pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, ectopic pregnancy) as well as prevent the spread of infection.
Harms	
ACPM (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invasiveness of some screening procedures</li> <li>• Potential for patient anxiety, embarrassment, and the risk of unnecessary treatment of patients with false-positive results, including potential side effects of drugs</li> </ul>
BASHH (2002)	None stated
CDC (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The frequent side effects of erythromycin might discourage patient compliance with this regimen.</li> <li>• An association between oral erythromycin and infantile hypertrophic pyloric stenosis (IHPS) has been reported in infants aged &lt;6 weeks who were treated with this drug.</li> </ul>
FMS (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse effects of medications. Some 10% of patients get mild gastric side effects from azithromycin and tetracyclines.</li> <li>• Harmful effects of partner notification. Partner notification evaluations may result in harmful effects, such as domestic violence.</li> </ul>

## GUIDELINE CONTENT COMPARISON

The American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM), the British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH; formerly the Association for Genitourinary Medicine/Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases [AGUM/MSSVD]), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim (FMS) present recommendations for screening and management of chlamydial infection. BASHH and FMS provide explicit reasoning behind their judgments by ranking the level of evidence for each major recommendation. ACPM reviews the evidence for effectiveness of screening and treatment programs, as well as their cost-effectiveness. CDC briefly discusses the evidence used as the basis for specific recommendations throughout its guideline.

ACPM focuses on screening for chlamydial infection and is concerned mainly with the identification of the populations that are at highest risk for chlamydial infection and its complications. BASHH, CDC, and FMS address most aspects of chlamydial infection, including diagnosis, treatment, patient education, and follow-

up. Unlike the other organizations, however, BASHH does not offer screening recommendations as this is the subject of ongoing research. The scope of the CDC guideline is broader than that of the others in that it includes diagnosis and management of chlamydial infections among infants and children. The CDC also addresses other sexually transmitted diseases characterized by urethritis and cervicitis, such as those caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and other forms of nongonococcal urethritis.

## Areas of Agreement

### Screening of Asymptomatic High-Risk Groups

ACPM, CDC, and FMS agree that routine screening should be considered in sexually active women (ACPM and CDC specify women aged 25 years or younger). In addition, these three guideline developers consider women of any age who change sexual partners at high risk for infection. They also agree that sexual partners of infected patients should be screened. Although BASHH does not make specific recommendations about screening, it does acknowledge risk factors for infection.

### Screening of Patients with Signs/Symptoms of Chlamydial Infection

ACPM, CDC, and FMS recommend that men and women with signs or symptoms of *C. trachomatis* infection (e.g., urethritis or urethral discharge in men and cervical discharge or friability in women) be tested for chlamydial infection.

### Types of Screening Tests

All four guideline groups agree that nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) are the most sensitive and specific diagnostic tests for chlamydial infection. NAATs include polymerase chain reaction and ligase chain reaction assays. NAATs have the additional advantage over other testing methods (cell culture, antigen detection) in that they can be performed on urine samples, thus eliminating the need for invasive testing. Although cell cultures have traditionally been held as the "gold standard," especially for medico-legal cases, NAATs have been shown to be more sensitive and easier to use than culture.

### Specimen of Choice

ACPM and BASHH are in general agreement that endocervical swabs are the specimen of choice in adult women who are undergoing vaginal examinations for genital infection. First-void urine is recognized as an alternative for women unwilling or unable to undergo vaginal examination. FMS recommends first-void urine for both men and women, and urethral and cervical swabs as an alternative specimen when gene amplification methods are used. All four guideline groups agree that first-void urine is the specimen of choice for men when DNA amplification tests are used as screening tests. FMS adds that first-void urine samples are well suited for home screening. CDC does not make specific recommendations on types of screening specimens for adults.

### Antibiotic Regimens in Nonpregnant Women and Men

BASHH, CDC, and FMS are in general agreement that uncomplicated genital chlamydial infection may be treated with tetracyclines (e.g., tetracycline, doxycycline, minocycline, lymecycline, Deteclo); azithromycin; or ofloxacin. Single-dose azithromycin is acknowledged by all groups as the regimen of choice in patients who may be noncompliant with multi-dose regimens. Erythromycin is indicated only when other antibiotics are contraindicated (such as during pregnancy) or not tolerated by the patient.

#### Partner Notification and Treatment

All four organizations recommend referral of sexual partners for screening and possible treatment. BASHH states that in men with symptomatic chlamydial infection, all sexual partners over the four weeks prior to onset of symptoms are at risk for infection and should be referred. In women and asymptomatic men, all partners over the last 6 months should be referred. CDC states that sex partners should be evaluated, tested, and treated if they had sexual contact with an infected patient during the 60 days before onset of symptoms or diagnosis; however, they also recommend evaluation and treatment of the last sexual contact, even if that contact was more than 60 days before symptom onset. Neither APCM nor FMS makes specific recommendations regarding time of last sexual contact for partner notification.

#### Follow-up

BASHH, CDC, and FMS offer recommendations on follow-up of patients after treatment. BASHH and CDC agree that retesting for *C. trachomatis* is not routinely necessary, after completing treatment unless noncompliance with therapy is suspected or patients are still symptomatic. BASHH and CDC both acknowledge, however, that retesting should be considered 3 weeks after the end of erythromycin treatment because it is less efficacious than doxycycline or azithromycin. BASHH, CDC, and FMS also emphasize that any retesting should be done a minimum of 3 weeks after initiation of therapy to avoid false-positive results.

Although CDC does not recommend retesting after treatment (i.e., test-of-cure), the guideline does recommend that physicians advise women with chlamydial infection to be rescreened three to four months after infection because of the high probability of reinfection. CDC also strongly recommends that health care providers rescreen all women treated for chlamydial infection whenever they present for care within 12 months of infection.

#### Patient Education and Preventive Counseling

BASHH states that patients with chlamydial infections should be provided with information (including written material) on the nature of the chlamydial infection. Both guideline groups recommend counseling on safe sex practices, including condom use. CDC states that patients should receive instruction on partner referral and avoiding sexual intercourse until completion of therapy and they and their sex partners are no longer symptomatic.

ACPM and FMS do not provide recommendations for patient education or preventive counseling.

## Areas of Differences

There are some differences among guidelines in recommendations offered for pregnant and breast feeding patient groups.

### Screening of Asymptomatic Pregnant Women

ACPM and CDC are the only groups that offer specific recommendations on routine screening of asymptomatic pregnant women. Specifically, ACPM recommends screening of all pregnant women during the first trimester or at their first antenatal visit, with rescreening during the third trimester for high-risk women. Their rationale is that screening and treatment for chlamydia in pregnancy is associated with a reduction in premature rupture of membranes and small-for-gestational-age infants. Furthermore, they state, the prevalence of chlamydial infection is at least as great in pregnant women as in non-pregnant women. CDC maintains that prenatal screening of pregnant women, especially those under 25 years of age, can prevent chlamydial infection among neonates. Adoption of this recommendation could depend on local or regional surveys of the prevalence of infection in this population group.

### Antibiotic Regimens during Pregnancy and Breast Feeding

BASHH and CDC agree that either erythromycin or amoxicillin should be used to treat chlamydial infection in pregnant women or in women who are breast feeding. While FMS agrees that amoxicillin and erythromycin are equally effective for antenatal chlamydial cervicitis, they recommend azithromycin as the treatment of choice for pregnant patients. In addition, both CDC and BASHH suggest that single-dose azithromycin may be both safe and effective during pregnancy, although data are limited in this patient group.

---

This Synthesis was first prepared by NGC on May 29, 2001. It has been updated a number of times since then and reviewed by the respective guideline developers whose guidelines are included. It was updated most recently on December 20, 2006 following the archiving of USPSTF's screening guideline.

Internet citation: National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC). Guideline synthesis: Screening for and management of chlamydial infection. In: National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC) [website]. Rockville (MD): 2001 Nov 05 (updated 2006 Dec). [cited YYYY Mon DD]. Available: <http://www.guideline.gov>.

---

